

mander retiring as far as Dunbar. They still disclaimed any seditious intention, though the fact could not be gainsaid that they were in open rebellion against constituted authority. Their action, they insisted, was dictated by motives of religion and self-defence. " We mean no tumult," wrote Knox, who was now thundering from the pulpit of St Giles' itself, " no alteration of authoritie, but only the reformation of religion , and suppressing of idolatrie." Rather a large programme certainly, and one which could hardly be accomplished without a good deal of " tumult," without, in fact, the complete overthrow of the regent's policy and authority. " The reformation is somewhat violent," he added in a letter to Cecil, apologetically, " becaus the adversaries be stubborn ; non that pro-' fesseth Christ Jesus usurpeth anything against the authoritie, nyther yet intendeth to usurpe, unless streangearis be brought in to suborn and bring in bondage the liberties of this poore contrey." In that case, he added, the movement might assume a very different aspect.

In spite of his profession of respect for " authority," Knox and his associates must have seen that they had entered on an enterprise which must lead to the undoing of the established government. In the near sequel it came in fact to be a trial of strength between authority backed by a foreign power, and the Congregation backed by English aid. It was not possible to establish the Reformation in opposition to the regent without rebellion, and even revolution, and there would have been more force in Knox's representations and appeals if he had plainly recognised the fact. The regent at all events saw clearly enough that a crisis had come. To come to terms with the Protestants meant the sacrifice of the old Church and a radical breach in policy. Moreover, it would jeopardise her family interests, which were bound up with the supremacy of the Church and the maintenance of the old alliance. The Protestants, as led by Knox, would not be satisfied with toleration, even' if she were minded to grant it, which she was not, if she could help it. They would not, could not, on Knox's principles, truckle to idolatry, and the struggle, in spite of his plea of self-defence and his disclaimer of usurping " the authoritie," was indeed one for mastery. In the eyes of the regent such disclaimers were therefore worth